

By Francis Dickie.

**A**n immense continent with millions of inhabitants, a great unknown civilization, a brilliant empire of the past, all destroyed by earthquake, fire and flood, engulfed in the ocean—such is the deluge-drama that has just been revealed by two independent investigations of the enigma of Easter Island, a tiny volcanic speck, emerging out of the lonely Pacific, 2,300 miles off the coast of Chile and 1,500 miles removed from the nearest inhabited country.

Since its discovery by Admiral Roggeveen in 1772, this isle has been a constant source of stimulation to the minds and activities of archaeologists and to the imaginings of romancers of every description. For there, on the slopes which face the boundless ocean, carved out of the porous rock of which the island is largely composed, stand huge platforms, from 20 to 30 feet wide and high and hundreds of feet in length. No cement has been used in their construction, but the blocks of which they are built are perfectly shaped and joined together.

Even more remarkable than these platforms are the great stone statues which surround them, some upright, some overthrown and shattered, some only partly carved. They are enormous images; grotesque human busts, ranging from 5 to 68 feet in height, and looking out over the sea with inscrutable, unseeing eyes.

*Curious ancient wood-carving found in the possession of the present inhabitants of Easter Island.*



## Does a Lost Continent Lie Buried Beneath Easter Island?

What ancient race of people produced these remarkable examples of sculpture? Surely not the Polynesians who now dwell on Easter Island, for they have no knowledge of stone carving and look upon the ancient statues as "the handiwork of the gods." This enigma has for several years occupied the attention of two investigators in particular, Prof. Macmillan Brown, a noted antipodean scientific worker, and Mr. Frank Burnett, an archaeologist who has spent the last twenty-five years in the South Seas and South America.

Both of these scholars, working independently, have recently returned to civilization. Prof. Brown, coming directly from Easter Island, reached Sydney, Aus., on Aug. 30, and Mr. Burnett, who had followed the trail of the evidence to South America, emerged at Vancouver a few days later. Both have issued statements summarizing their work on the problem, and both have arrived at this amazing conclusion: that the Easter Island remains point unmistakably to a great Pacific Continent, to an empire and a civilization which were completely wiped out and submerged under the sea by some vast natural cataclysm.

"From the state of certain images left unfinished in a peculiar manner," reads Prof. Brown's brief and recently cabled statement in part, "it seems almost indubitable that an abrupt abandonment of the work must have taken place."

A lost continent, a vanished empire, a civilization wiped out and reposing on the ocean's bottom—it recalls a story first related by the Greek philosopher Plato, who had it from certain Egyptian scientists, that 9,000 years before the time of Solon, ancient lawgiver of Athens, there existed a vast country just outside the Strait of Gibraltar, a country whose inhabitants had evolved a perfect form of government, under which every one was happy and contented. The name of this country was Atlantis, and the Atlantians overran and subdued all the Mediterranean nations, except Athens. They came a tremendous cataclysm, and Atlantis, a land as large as Asia Minor and Libya combined, suddenly sank with all its palaces and people, into the ocean now called the Atlantic.

During the twenty-four centuries since Plato's death there has been unceasing speculation concerning the possible germ of truth that may have formed the foundation of Plato's story, but nothing can be proved. We have no facts, no remains, only visions such as the submerged city of splendor that Jules Verne has drawn for us in his pseudoscientific tale, "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea."

But the authentic reports of Prof. Brown and Mr. Burnett regarding Easter Island at once seem to translate the old legend not only from the Atlantic to the Pacific but also from the realm of fancy and romance to the domain of fact and history.

The facts, according to the two men who have worked thousands of miles apart and unknown to each other, are briefly as follows:

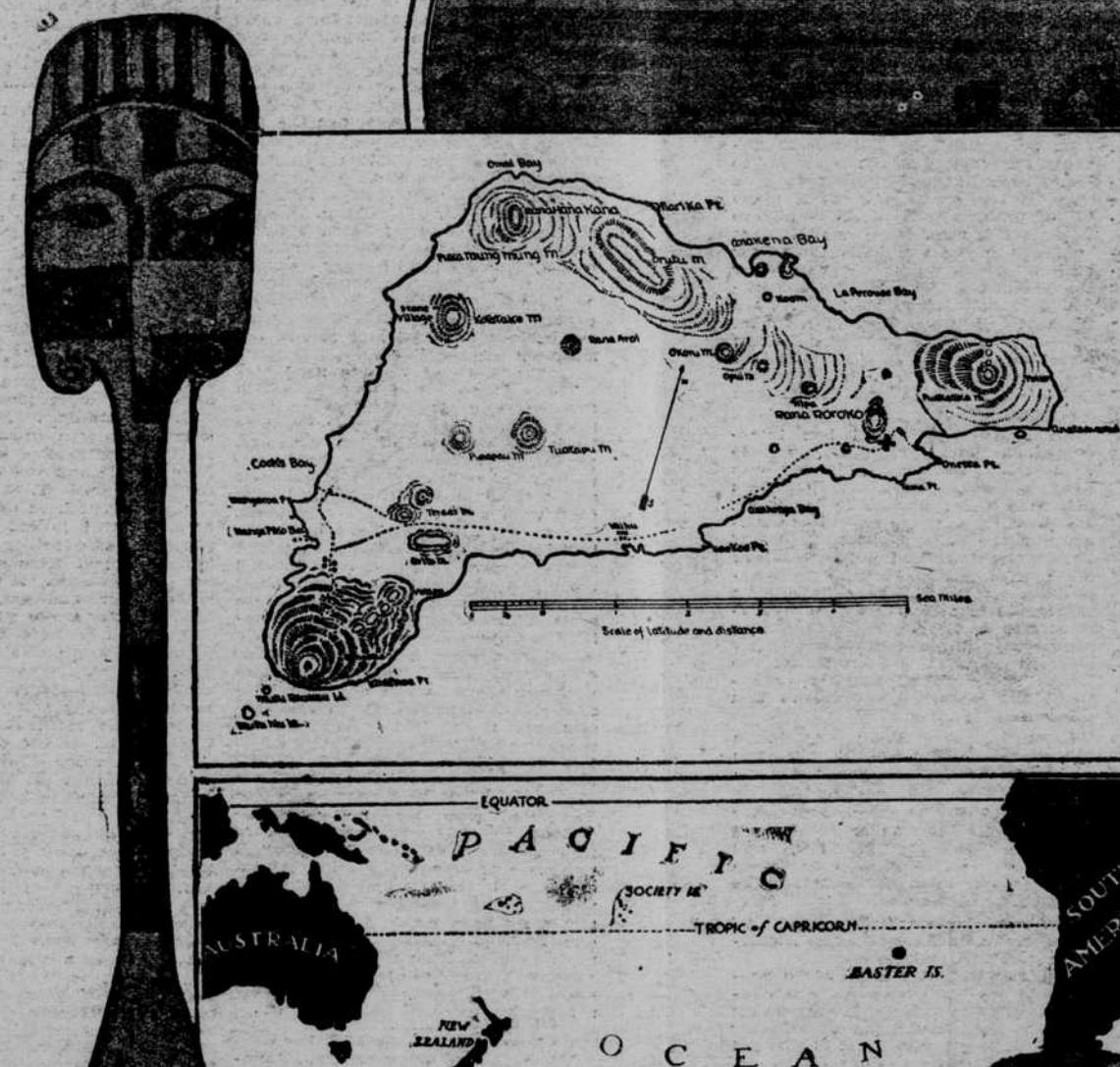
In certain sections of South America there exist traces of a civilization that is certainly older than that of the Incas, the Indians whom the first European explorers found on their arrival in the sixteenth century. These traces are of various kinds. First, there is the Nauah language, which cannot be traced to any known source, and which therefore seems to be the audible relic of an extremely ancient and independent tongue. In the second place, the writings of the prehistoric South Americans are different from those of any other known race, ancient or modern. The same is true of the pre-Columbian ruins found in Yucatan. Furthermore, skulls belonging to men who existed in South America at least 500 years before its discovery were brought back recently by Prof. Marshall Seville of Columbia University. Teeth in these skulls were found to be filled with an alloy and crowned with metallic caps which are equal to the best modern dental work.

Finally, there are the examples of statuary and sculpture of ancient South America which re-

semble nothing in the world—except the stone busts found on Easter Island.

The inevitable conclusion to be drawn is that a vast stretch of land once connected what is now the Chilean coast and the Western Isles. Mr. Burnett has summed up the evidence in the following declaration:

"For my part, having seen the Easter Island sculptures and those at



Maps showing Easter Island in detail, giving the route of Paymaster William J. Thompson, U. S. N., who explored it in 1886, and showing its position in the Southern Pacific Ocean.

Decorated wooden paddle used by the Polynesian Easter Islanders of to-day.

the ruins at Tiahuanaca, near Lake Titicaca in South America, I am in favor of the theory that they are both the handiwork of a race that inhabited South America and the eastern groups of the South Pacific when the latter comprised a great land area, a race that existed and passed away ages before the rise of the Inca Empire, and before the Polynesians left their Asiatic home on their great journey eastward to the Pacific Sea. About the only difference between the images at Tiahuanaca and those on Easter Island consist in the design of the ear. At the former place the

organ is depicted in natural shape, while on Easter Island the lobe is greatly distended. From all available facts, I am fully in agreement with Prof. Brown when he states that a sudden abandonment of the work came, probably with a cutting off of supplies. The workmen might possibly have eaten each other, as there is nothing to show that they were not cannibalistic.

"The abandonment was very abrupt, for a num-



Images standing at the base of the outer slope of the volcano Rana Roraka, the site of the principal ancient quarries, marked by a cross on the map. To the right, one of the best preserved of the stone images.

ber of almost completed images are left attached to the rock face out of which they were being carved. Many of them may still be seen in the crater in an unfinished state. The design is invariably that of a human body terminating at the hips, with the arms held close to the sides. The head is flat in shape, and is surmounted by a red crown carved from a different stone, found in another crater. The bodies are composed of solid gray lava, obtained from the crater of Hoti Iti."

To reconstruct a very bare outline of the history of the "Lost Pacific Continent" is not now a particularly difficult task. Many ages ago such a continent harbored a people skilled in arts and refinements to some extent, at least, a people whose religious beliefs caused them to erect mounds, platforms and images. Then came a tremendous physical upheaval. The western bulk of the continent sank into the ocean, leaving only the peak of one of its highest volcanoes above the surface. But this peak, now known as Easter Island, has preserved for future ages the mute evidence of the empire that has passed away.

Carved tablet found by Paymaster Thompson. According to an old Easter Island native, the words represent an ancient religious hymn, beginning as follows:

"What power has the Great King on land?"

"He has power to make the plants grow and to change the sky to different colors."

"All hail the power of the Great King who makes us listen to the young plants, to admire the skies of different colors, and to behold the clouds that rise."

South American stone idol whose striking resemblance to the Easter Island images leads investigators to the conclusion that the ancient race of people who carved it was closely affiliated with the stone workers of Easter Island.

